

**Ministry of
Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation**

**2009/10 – 2011/12
SERVICE PLAN UPDATE**

September 2009



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Published by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



I am pleased to deliver the Service Plan for the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. This plan gives me the opportunity to outline the practical and measurable actions the Ministry will undertake over the next three fiscal years to further the New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples. This relationship will continue to build on the principles of mutual respect, recognition and reconciliation.

The Ministry will continue to advise and support government agencies and organizations on initiatives to help close the social and economic gaps between Aboriginal citizens and other British Columbians by 2015.

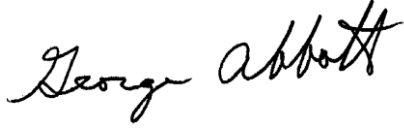
We are encouraged by the implementation in spring 2009 of the Tsawwassen Treaty – the first urban treaty in B.C. – and the recent passing of the Maa-nulth treaty. B.C. and the five Maa-nulth First Nations are now focused on completing the many tasks necessary to implement the agreement. Work toward finalizing other treaties continues to gain momentum, with In-SHUCK-ch Nation, Yekooche First Nation, Sliammon Indian Band and Yale First Nation all on track to complete final agreements. Treaties are a formal expression of reconciliation and they are a positive tool for building capacity and stimulating community economies.

Last year, the Klahoose and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations signed the Province's first incremental treaty agreements, a new and innovative way to provide access to land and resources earlier in the treaty process. We continue to pursue incremental treaty agreements to further progress at the treaty table and create opportunities for First Nations to build social and economic opportunities while they negotiate broader treaties. The Province and First Nations leaders are engaged in a dialogue about reconciliation and how, together, we can further implement the New Relationship. Over the coming year we will continue this dialogue and determine how we can build further agreements that achieve reconciliation to long standing issues, and close the gaps in health, education and economic development.

B.C. is home to a number of Aboriginal entrepreneurs who work in all business sectors and make valuable contributions to our economy. The Province will continue working across government on initiatives in education, housing, health, sport and other areas through partnership agreements such as the Aboriginal post-secondary strategy, First Nations Education Jurisdiction Agreement, and the tripartite housing memorandum of understanding that will lead to the development of a comprehensive approach to on- and off-reserve housing.

We look forward to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the opportunities they will provide to support economic development and build cultural pride for First Nations and Métis. Through the efforts of the four Host First Nations, the story of Canada's Aboriginal peoples will be shared with the world.

The *Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation 2009/10 - 2011/12 Service Plan Update* was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Honourable George Abbott
Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
August 31, 2009

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation is leading the way in building new relationships with Aboriginal peoples founded on respect, recognition and reconciliation. The Ministry provides strategic advice across government and identifies opportunities to work with Aboriginal peoples to facilitate the removal of barriers and stimulate positive outcomes in the province. The Ministry is government's lead on the New Relationship and is working with First Nations to foster strong governments, social justice and economic self-sufficiency.

The Ministry is focusing its efforts in three key strategic areas:

- closing the socio-economic gaps between Aboriginal peoples and other British Columbians;
- building respectful relationships with Aboriginal peoples; and
- reconciliation of Aboriginal rights and title through treaties and other lasting agreements.

The Ministry supports achievement of these goals by recommending innovative policies and initiatives to government. The Ministry promotes creative and integrated cross government work that brings together Aboriginal partners with representatives from other ministries and Crown agencies, federal and local governments and other sectors around Aboriginal initiatives. The Ministry does this by building and maintaining relationships to achieve success on issues of shared interest.

The Ministry negotiates treaties and other lasting agreements, and assists in their implementation. The Ministry also champions community development principles within government to increase effectiveness of working with Aboriginal peoples and works closely with First Nations on priorities identified by communities to build capacity based on the communities' assets and strengths.

The Ministry has collaboratively achieved a number of accomplishments toward closing the socio-economic gaps, building respectful relationships with Aboriginal partners. Negotiations are ongoing throughout the province to conclude treaties and other lasting agreements, as are Common Table and Treaty Revitalization efforts to improve the treaty process.

Working with its partners the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation also makes appointments to a number of agencies, boards and commissions including the BC Treaty Commission, First Peoples' Advisory Committee, First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council, Native Economic Development Advisory Board and New Relationship Trust Board.

A list of statutes that fall under the responsibility of the Ministry can be found at:

www.leg.bc.ca/procs/allacts/arr.htm

Strategic Context

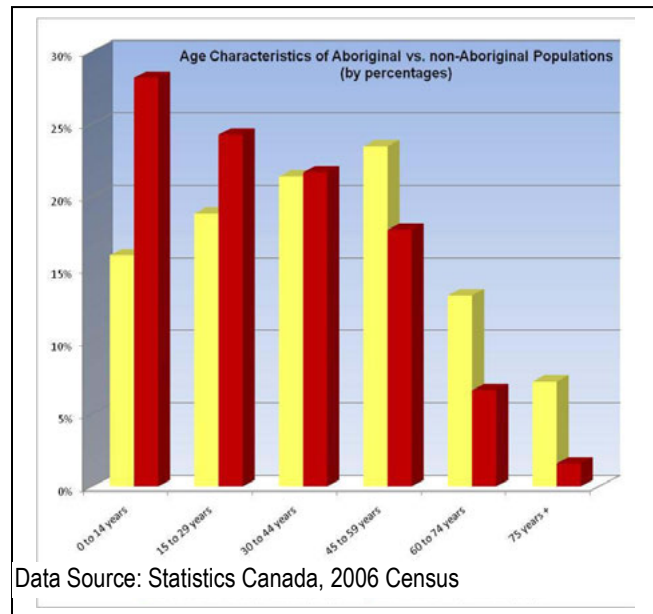
The Ministry is at the forefront of building enduring relationships with Aboriginal peoples by recognizing their constitutional rights, reconciling treaty rights, and supporting efforts to rectify the socio-economic disparities that exist between Aboriginal peoples and other British Columbians. While presenting enormous challenges, these multiple ministry roles also generate new opportunities for moving forward.

Considering the Challenges

The Aboriginal population in British Columbia is characterized by unique demographic qualities that will inform policy and program decisions in the coming years. British Columbia is home to over one-third of the more than 600 First Nations communities in Canada, comprising the most culturally and linguistically diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples in the country. There are nearly 200,000 people in BC who identify themselves as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit and, between 2001 and 2006, the Aboriginal population in the province grew by 15 per cent. This is more than three times the rate of the non-Aboriginal population.

Likewise, the fastest growing population demographic province-wide is Aboriginal youth. In fact, the median age of the Aboriginal population in British Columbia is approximately 12 years younger than the median age of the province's population overall. This demographic compels the Province to engage Aboriginal youth in order to develop opportunities that address both their aspirations and their potential to make important contributions to productivity and labour market demands created by an aging population in British Columbia.

There are also other social and economic policy implications inherently linked to this Aboriginal demographic trend. While the British Columbia population overall is becoming increasingly aware of the challenges, effects, implications and consequences of an aging population, a preponderance of the Aboriginal population is rooted in concerns associated with, for example, child care, education, supports for youth at risk, safe and affordable housing and employment. Clearly, the stark differences between the population "pyramids" of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations necessitate a diverging policy focus and a disparate suite of programs and services.



Another important demographic consideration is the increasing urbanization of Aboriginal peoples in BC. In 2006, 60 per cent of the Aboriginal population in BC lived in urban areas and only 26 per cent lived on reserves. Engaging with urban Aboriginal peoples requires special effort as their voices are diffused. There is no formal system or entity in place to facilitate dialogue between urban Aboriginal

interests and government. Some of the challenges for the ministry include ensuring opportunities for discourse are available to urban Aboriginal peoples, understanding the distinct needs of an urban Aboriginal population, and supporting ministries and agencies to take appropriate steps so Aboriginal peoples across the demographic spectrum, whether residing on or off reserves, have access to services and economic opportunities at the same level as other British Columbians.

While increasing urbanization represents the loss of “place” as a cultural touchstone, similarly, the decreasing numbers of First Nations individuals fluent in native languages signals the loss of an intrinsic expression of shared cultural heritage and affiliation. Language plays both practical and symbolic roles in maintaining and reinforcing cultural identity. A growing concern among First Nations people and the Province is the imminent extinction of many First Nations languages. British Columbia is home to 34 distinct First Nations languages, representing two-thirds of all the indigenous languages in Canada. However, without action, many of these languages will disappear within a generation.

Managing staffing costs has always been one of the prime considerations in maintaining overall government affordability, and since 2001 this government has been diligent in reviewing staff spending each year. This is particularly true in these current economic times. All governments are in the similar position of having to balance spending and service levels against revenues that have declined over the past year in this extraordinary fiscal climate.

Staffing costs can be managed through removal of unfilled positions, retirements, staff efficiencies gained through coordination and collaboration across government, administrative program changes and, if necessary, a reduction in the staffing budget. In the 2010/11 budget, we will be managing staffing costs in the context of the current economic climate, examining all opportunities to continue to reduce these costs where possible. In the 2009/10 budget every effort has been made to preserve high staffing levels for frontline services.

In future years, government will continue to review its staffing budget to ensure those resources are allocated prudently, efficiently and towards government’s key priorities.

Identifying the Opportunities

While challenges may exist, innovative approaches, sound planning and vibrant partnerships with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations have made it possible for the ministry to maintain the dynamic energy which has propelled the last few years.

There are nearly 100 women chiefs in Canada and approximately half of them are in British Columbia. This is a unique demographic, in terms of First Nations political leadership. Female chiefs and councillors are a critical access point and a resource on feasible and culturally relevant ways to meet the challenges associated with improving the social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal peoples, using a strengths-based approach that situates Aboriginal women leaders as agents of change.

The recent election of former BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief, Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, to the position of National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations is a promising development for Aboriginal relations in British Columbia. This is the first time in over 30 years that a National Chief has been elected from British Columbia and having a National Chief originating from BC has the potential to increase the profile of the unique First Nations issues and processes in the province. National Chief Atleo's deep awareness of the social issues that impact First Nations communities, his commitment to education and his abiding interest in the need for economic development may also help shape the national agenda and positively influence trilateral policy direction.

A key relationship that promises to help achieve success for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games is with the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations – known collectively as the Four Host First Nations. Agreements are in place that acknowledge the critical importance of the support and participation of these First Nations and define economic, cultural, sport and capacity-building benefits and legacies for the Four Host First Nations. In addition, the International Olympic Committee has recognized the Four Host First Nations as official partners – a first in Olympic and Paralympic history.

The Recognition and Reconciliation discussion paper was jointly developed by the Province and the First Nations Leadership Council. It was recognized by all parties as a starting point for discussion. The Province remains committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal communities and organizations to achieve reconciliation. The ministry is discussing options to provide greater clarity to questions around Aboriginal rights and title, through potential legislation or other mechanisms. Throughout the past year, the ministry has listened respectfully to all voices and points of view and will continue to explore a range of options to address questions surrounding Aboriginal rights and title.

British Columbia also remains committed to the negotiation of treaties as a full and formal expression of reconciliation and to maintaining respectful relationships with existing treaty First Nations. Treaties clarify and specify how Aboriginal rights will be expressed in the context of modern Canadian society. They set out who has treaty rights, what those rights mean and what obligations fall on governments in implementing treaties. Treaties also give First Nations better tools to develop their governance, lands and resources. British Columbia is in final agreement negotiations with four First Nations: Yale, In-SHUCK-ch, Sliammon and Yekooche.

The Province and Canada have also recently made a number of new land and cash offers and the ministry anticipates at least one additional agreement in principle will emerge this year. British Columbia successfully introduced the incremental treaty agreement (ITA) tool in 2008 and has already achieved the first two ITA agreements with Tla-o-qui-aht and Klahoose First Nations. ITAs represent a valuable opportunity to make progress with First Nations that are participating in the treaty process but are not yet ready to move to full final agreement. These agreements create economic opportunities and accelerate and stimulate treaty negotiations. The ministry expects to conclude additional ITAs in the future.

Along with treaties are other lasting agreements which vary in scope and content but all contribute to achieving recognition and reconciliation. They may work to build relationships with First Nations, resolve conflicts or address concerns associated with asserted traditional territory. Success was seen in the recent agreements between the Kwadacha and Tsay Key Dene First Nations, BC and BC Hydro

which resolve historic damages from the creation and operation of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Williston Reservoir and build opportunities for community economic and cultural development for future generations. British Columbia has also finalized an economic benefits agreement with the Blueberry River First Nations, and is moving to finalize similar agreements with other Treaty 8 First Nations, that will create stability for the development of oil, gas and other resources in the northeast of the province. Strategic engagement agreements and economic and community development agreements also create innovative ways to share new resource revenues with First Nations incrementally.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation's goals, objectives, strategies and performance measures serve as the framework that defines what the Ministry intends to achieve during the life of its service plan, and the means for gauging and reporting on performance with respect to its stated goals and objectives.

Targets for the Ministry's performance measures are generated by considering historical trends associated with the measures and determining reasonable performance expectations during the period covered by this service plan.

The baselines for key performance indicators are predicated on available data from a variety of sources and the availability of complete data sets varies from key indicator to key indicator.

The goals of the Ministry will be met by focusing the majority of its efforts in three areas:

- closing socio-economic gaps between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians;
- building respectful relationships with Aboriginal peoples; and
- concluding treaties and other lasting agreements.

For further information on the agreements, policies and initiatives cited here please see the Ministry website at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/>.

In addition to these goals, the Ministry is also actively engaged in meeting government's goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to be part of a carbon neutral public sector by 2010. The Ministry has begun immediate steps to reduce its corporate carbon footprint through reductions in travel, more efficient energy use in its office space, enhanced recycling and composting, and other operational and procedural changes that will generate climate change benefits. In addition, the Ministry has committed to measuring and reducing GHG emissions associated with all Ministry operations and programs in order to achieve government targets and to working with First Nations and other ministries to advance government's green agenda.

Goal 1: Improved social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal peoples

The *Transformative Change Accord* and *Métis Nation Relationship Accord* set out goals for closing the significant differences that exist between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians on important social and economic indicators. These gaps developed over decades and will not be closed immediately. As a result, key performance indicators may see modest substantive reportable progress on an annual basis over the next three years; nonetheless the target is to close the gap by 2015.

Objective 1.1: Progress on actions in the *Transformative Change Accord* and the *Métis Nation Relationship Accord* associated with closing the socio-economic gaps

While other ministries and Crown agencies are directly responsible for action on key performance indicators, the Ministry plays a central role in supporting the development and implementation of action plans and providing critical information about progress on closing the gaps not only to the parties involved but also to the public. The *Transformative Change Accord* and *Métis Nation Relationship Accord* guide our work.

Strategies

- Under each priority area, we work with other ministries and Aboriginal partners.
- Support work by other ministries on closing the socio-economic gap such as: education, housing and infrastructure, health, economic development, child and family development, policing, administration of justice, corrections and safety initiatives.
- Facilitate and support collaboration among Aboriginal and First Nation organizations, all levels of government and the private sector on initiatives to close the socio-economic gaps.
- Monitor and report on activities and progress towards meeting the goals of the *Transformative Change Accord* and the *Métis Nation Relationship Accord*.
- Promote discussions on, and evaluation of, key performance indicators such as: high school completion rates; off-reserve Aboriginal households in core housing needs; life expectancy at birth; unemployment rates; and others.

Performance Measure 1: Closing the socio-economic gaps.

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Progress on action items in the <i>Transformative Change Accord</i> and the <i>Métis Nation Relationship Accord</i> .	Plans in place	Progress achieved in key areas	Progress achieved in key areas	Progress achieved in key areas

Data Source: Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation will gather performance indicator data from a variety of sources. The following plans are already in place: *Transformative Change Accord* (2005), *Métis Nation Relationship Accord* (2006), *Housing Matters Strategy* (2006) with subsequent *First Nations Housing MOU* (2008), *Aboriginal Post Secondary Education Strategy* (2007), *Transformative Change Accord First Nations Health Plan* (2007), *Strong, Safe and Supported* (2008). Additionally a number of plans or strategies have been developed by Aboriginal leadership. Government works to support actions where possible. For example: *First Nations Technology Plan* (2006), *First Nations Economic Development Plan* (2008), and *Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective Language, Culture and Education Action Plan*.

Discussion:

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation has developed a comprehensive reporting framework resulting in two annual reports: *New Relationships with Aboriginal People and Communities in B.C.* and *Measuring Outcomes*. The New Relationships document provides an annual report of key activities and strategies implemented across government to support progress in closing the socio-economic gaps. It also highlights current examples of how government actions are supporting positive change in the lives of Aboriginal individuals and communities. *Measuring Outcomes*, a companion document to *New Relationships with Aboriginal People and Communities in B.C.*, is a technical report that tracks progress over time in achieving societal level change in Aboriginal populations – it measures success in achieving desired outcomes. Both reports are closely aligned to plans (see "Data Sources") and reporting models developed by lead ministries, and use the best data sources available at this time.

Objective 1.2: Development of culturally appropriate policies, programs and services

Strategies

- Lead and/or support the negotiation and implementation of agreements that contribute to addressing socio-economic disparities.
- Support development of policies and initiatives in partnership with Aboriginal peoples.
- Support delivery of programs and services in partnership with Aboriginal peoples.

Performance Measure 2: Collaborative policy development

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of new provincial policies and initiatives that have been developed collaboratively with Aboriginal peoples and First Nations.	18	20	25	28

Data Source: Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and ministries participating in the implementation of *Transformative Change Accord* and the *Métis Nation Relationship Accord*.

Goal 2: Respectful and constructive relationships with Aboriginal peoples

Objective 2.1: Aboriginal peoples possess the capacity necessary to enable meaningful engagement with government

Strategies:

- Support and coordinate actions by ministries and Crown agencies related to the New Relationship.
- Support capacity development and governance enhancement for Aboriginal governments and organizations.
- Support Aboriginal language, culture and heritage initiatives.
- Support Aboriginal community and economic development.
- Coordinate and streamline consultation processes.

Performance Measure 3: Engagement capacity

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of new initiatives that build the capacity of First Nations and Aboriginal organization to participate in government engagements.	10	10	11	12

Data Source: Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.

Objective 2.2: Increase positive awareness among British Columbians of the diversity and value of Aboriginal cultures

Strategies:

- Build and facilitate partnerships with Aboriginal peoples.
- Support greater recognition of Aboriginal language, culture and heritage.
- Lead and support Aboriginal awareness initiatives within the public sector and British Columbia.

Performance Measure 4: Positive awareness of First Nations cultures

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Per centage of people expressing positive awareness of diversity and value of First Nations cultures.	30% ¹	+1.5%	+2%	+3%

Data Source: Survey conducted by BC Stats with participation by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.

¹ From September 2007 - September 2008, BC Stats asked two key questions of the public: "How aware are you of diverse First Nations cultures within BC?" and "First Nations have made a wide range of contributions to BC" -- What is your level of agreement?

Goal 3: Reconciliation of Aboriginal and treaty rights

Objective 3.1: Conclude agreements that lead to the reconciliation of Aboriginal and treaty rights

Strategies:

- Support agreements among First Nations, government and local governments.
- Lead and support the negotiation of agreements that contribute to reconciliation of Aboriginal and treaty rights.
- Negotiate treaties and Incremental Treaty Agreements that lead to treaty.
- Lead and support the implementation of treaties and other agreements.

Performance Measure 5: Treaties and agreements

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of treaties and agreements that build incremental progress towards reconciliation.	14	15	16	18

Data Source: Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and other ministries and Crown agencies as appropriate (i.e., includes treaty and non-treaty process agreements).

Discussion:

While final treaty agreements are the Province’s preferred means of reconciling Aboriginal rights and title with the sovereignty of the Crown, other types of agreements can also contribute to reconciliation, for example, Incremental Treaty Agreements that provide beneficial results in the short

term which can be built on over time towards final treaties. In addition, the Province has entered into consultation protocols with First Nations that already have treaties.

Objective 3.2: Increase Aboriginal peoples' access to economic opportunities.

Providing more access to economic opportunities results in economic benefits for all British Columbians. Aboriginal participation in business ventures and resource development contributes to British Columbia's prosperity.

Strategies:

- Champion access to business venture and economic development opportunities through resource development agreements, benefit agreements and other strategic agreements.
- Facilitate access to training and skills development as well as support systems associated with economic development.
- Support employment initiatives in the private and public sectors.
- Support First Nations' access to land and resource tenures.

Performance Measure 6: Economic development opportunities

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Agreements and initiatives that provide economic opportunities to Aboriginal peoples.	6	10	12	15

Data Source: Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and other ministries and Crown agencies as appropriate (i.e., includes agreements that provide revenues, economic benefits and jobs to Aboriginal people).

Resource Summary

Full Time Equivalents (FTE) numbers for each Ministry are currently being reviewed across government and therefore are not reported in this Service Plan Update. FTE's are routinely reported in the Public Accounts and more detailed information will now be publicly reported in a new Annual Report on the Corporate HR Plan, released each Fall. For more information, see the Budget and Fiscal Plan documentation.

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates ¹	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Negotiations	41,608	53,984	28,254	26,596
Aboriginal Relations	8,091	4,281	4,281	4,281
Executive and Support Services	7,912	6,885	6,855	6,828
First Citizens' Fund	4,200	4,100	4,100	4,100
Total	61,811	69,250	43,490	41,805
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	32	30	30	30
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Disbursements.....				
Negotiations – Nisga'a Treaty Payments	1,761	1,750	1,750	1,750
Negotiations – Land Acquisition	2,700	0	0	0
Net Cash (Requirements)	(4,461)	(1,750)	(1,750)	(1,750)
Total Disbursements	4,461	1,750	1,750	1,750
Total Net Cash Source (Requirements)	(4,461)	(1,750)	(1,750)	(1,750)

¹ the "2008/09 Restated Estimates" have been restated for comparative purposes only, in order to be consistent with the presentation of the 2009/10 *Estimates*."

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Hyperlinks to Additional Information

BC Treaty Commission

www.bctreaty.net/index.php

First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council

www.fphlcc.ca/

Métis Nation Relationship Accord

www.gov.bc.ca/arr/social/down/arr_metis_accord.pdf

Native Economic Development Advisory Board

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/economic/fcf/nedab.html>

New Relationship

www.gov.bc.ca/arr/newrelationship/down/new_relationship.pdf

New Relationship Trust

www.newrelationshiptrust.ca/

Transformative Change Accord

www.gov.bc.ca/arr/social/down/transformative_change_accord.pdf

Appendix: Status Report on Treaty Negotiations

Number of First Nations involved in the BC treaty negotiations process:	106
Number of First Nations at Stage 6 (implementation):	1
Number of First Nations at Stage 5 (final agreement):	13
Number of First Nations at Stage 4 (agreement-in-principle):	86
Number of First Nations at Stage 3 (framework agreement):	4
Number of First Nations at Stage 2 (readiness):	2
Number of First Nations at Stage 1 (statement of intent):	0

The Office of the Auditor General has asked the Ministry to report more fully on treaty negotiations by including an overview of the issues and challenges it faces and the steps the Ministry has taken to overcome these barriers to success.

Ratification of treaties by the Tsawwassen First Nation and the five Maa-nulth First Nations clearly demonstrates that the treaty process is working. The Province ratified both of these final agreements, the federal government ratified the Tsawwassen agreement on June 26, 2008, and the Tsawwassen treaty took effect on April 3, 2009. The federal government ratified the Maa-nulth final agreement on June 18, 2009, and the treaty will come into effect for the five First Nations when the parties set an effective date likely later this year. At that point, the parties will enter Stage 6, the implementation stage of treaty-making.

In addition, BC has two bilateral agreements, with Yale First Nation and In-SHUCK-ch Nation, that confirm negotiations are completed and await Canada's signature before going through the approval process for the three parties.

The Province continues to negotiate treaties that reflect the diversity of First Nations. Over the next few years more final agreements will be concluded as well as significant progress on agreements-in-principle. To address concerns about slow progress, some First Nations, Canada and British Columbia may utilize incremental treaty agreements and treaty related measures to help pave the way towards treaty.

BC has two incremental agreements – with Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and Klahoose First Nation. Incremental treaty agreements allow First Nations and the Province to enjoy shared benefits in advance of a final agreement. Incremental treaty agreements build trust among the parties, create incentives to reach further milestones and provide increased stability over land and resources. An incremental treaty agreement is not a replacement for treaty. An incremental treaty agreement advances treaty-related benefits for the First Nations and the Province. They are pre-treaty agreements, not final agreements.

In response to concerns raised by First Nations and independent external reviews, the Province, Canada and the First Nations Summit have agreed to discuss ways to improve the treaty process to support further progress in negotiations and work towards greater efficiencies and revitalization of the

treaty process by identifying and examining issues that may be impeding treaty negotiations. In addition, the Ministry and Canada have taken steps to streamline internal approval processes to conclude treaties.

The Common Table, whereby 64 First Nations, Canada and the Province worked together to identify ways to advance treaty negotiations, has yielded positive results. The parties reached consensus on some common principles and generated a list of areas to explore further to help expedite treaty negotiations. The Ministry also supports the BC Treaty Commission to use the full scope of its authority to advance the treaty process.

Under the treaty process, First Nations are responsible for resolving overlapping claims. At the same time, the Province and Canada have a duty to consult First Nations whose Aboriginal and treaty rights may be adversely impacted by treaties. Consequently, the Province supports consultation efforts to facilitate the expeditious resolution of overlap claims with First Nations both inside and outside of the treaty process.